

Health System Administrator - GS-0670-15
Associate Director for Administration and Support
V A Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

Factor 1: Level of Responsibility

The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS) is led by a Director who has ultimate responsibility for its operation. To effectively administer this consolidated Medical/Educational/Research facility, the Director, three Associate Directors and the Chief of Staff, comprise top management. All decisions concerning VAGLA policies, budget and personnel allocations, organizational changes and interpretation of agency policies and priorities rest with this body.

The Associate Director for Administration and Support has full, delegated line authority and responsibility for corporate level management of the administration and support components of VAGLAHS and overall responsibility for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling, reviewing, evaluating, and improving administrative and supporting operations of a health care facility/system that administers a variety of medical care and treatment programs for a large metropolitan area. These duties are geared toward successful accomplishment of VAGLAHS's assigned patient care, treatment, medical education, research and DOD contingent support missions.

The Associate Director for Administration and Support's managerial duties and responsibilities involve decisions that have a direct and substantial impact on VAGLAHS's programs. These include, but are not limited to, decisions affecting the nature, the scope, and the quality of, and emphasis in, VAGLAHS's administration and support program activities.

Associate Director Service Line Management Functions

The Associate Director for Administration and Support has full operational, administrative, and managerial authority over the activities of the following service lines: Acquisition and Material Management; Facilities Management; Financial Management, Human Resources; Information Management; Medical Administrative Services, Police and Security, Nutrition and Food and Voluntary Service. This comprises approximately 800 authorized FTEE. The incumbent also: (1) organizes and controls program evaluation activities; (2) coordinates and provides oversight to a quality assurance program to ensure that administrative activities are in compliance with standards issued by various accrediting and regulatory groups; (3) develops plans to ensure that action has been taken to correct deficiencies cited by accrediting bodies; (4) conducts a comprehensive and effective performance improvement program; (5) initiates corrective action on elements considered unacceptable in terms of program/service management; and (6) ensures that patient or staff complaints related to services under his/her jurisdiction are promptly addressed. The incumbent exercises full management level supervisory responsibilities over service chiefs and managers in the Administration and Support Service. This includes taking appropriate and timely action when VAGLAHS program plans and responsibilities delegated to service chiefs are not properly executed; plus prioritizing work efforts and evaluating performance. The incumbent provides counsel and/or instruction to subordinate service chiefs; interviews and selects candidates for key positions, recommending appointment, promotion or reassignment involving key positions in VAGLAHS. The incumbent hears and resolves complaints and grievances, referring those complaints that are more appropriately handled at higher levels to the Director for resolution. The incumbent also identifies and provides for management level development and training.

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Executive Management Duties

The Associate Director for Administration and Support: (1) determines program goals and objectives, develops short and long range plans in conjunction with the overall plans of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) system and the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 22, consistent with the Network's strategic planning process; (2) directs a comprehensive evaluation of program goals and objectives and makes necessary adjustments to improve delivery of patient care services; (3) establishes local policy in such areas as program emphasis and operating guidelines; (4) administers a system for the development and communication of program policies and procedures in accordance with new or existing rules and regulations, and ensures adherence to them; and (5) administers a management reporting system that provides appropriate data for decision making in such areas as: organizational improvements; changes in delegations of authority; position management; and coordination among the center's programs and services.

Program Planning

The incumbent identifies unique needs of the patient population served by VAGLAHS, and within available resources, develops and implements comprehensive plans that add value to the healthcare system. Develops an annual financial plan consistent with the network strategic plan and includes the participation of service chiefs to ensure that these plans meet the objectives of VAGLAHS and the Network. Delegates authority and adjusts organizational structures and management systems to accomplish the basic missions of VAGLAHS to assure that administrative programs and policies are integrated, and settle disputes that arise between services. Develops balanced plans designed to meet realistic needs of VAGLAHS in the mission and goals of VHA and VISN 22. Makes decisions substantially affecting economy of operations by limiting operating expenses without impairing patient care activities through management assessment, cost effective position management techniques, reorganization, methods improvements, and automation. The incumbent ensures that there is appropriate utilization of available resources through the allocation of resources to provide the best possible administrative and clinical support to patient care delivery in line with established priorities. Incumbent protects the integrity of the budget process and position management through compliance with existing regulatory guidelines.

Budget and Fiscal Management

Develops the need for and maintains an awareness of available resources, and makes recommendations to VAGLAHS's leadership team regarding needs, distribution or redistribution of these resources. The incumbent has full authority for the operational budget for a large integrated healthcare system that is responsible for the formulations, fiscal administration and control of the operational budget. Incumbent develops, implements, monitors, and adjusts plans to effectively and cost-efficiently accomplish the mission within budgetary constraints. Incumbent provides leadership and guidance in determining the resource needs of all organizational elements, distributing initial resource allocations, and adjusting resource allocations as dictated by a change in the program needs. Incumbent develops and implements systems and procedures for improving cost-effectiveness and productivity. Is delegated the sole approving authority for travel orders and vouchers for travel disbursement for all operations within Administration and Support.

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Personnel Management

The incumbent provides timely and responsive decisions to local VA union organizations and the employees they represent regarding complaints and grievances working with the Network HR manager. Resolves differences between key management officials in VAGLAHS, and resolves operational and human resources problems that may inhibit accomplishment of VAGLAHS goals. Discusses, investigates and responds to employee grievances and dissatisfactions in order to resolve conflicts. Incumbent participates with his/her colleagues at labor management meetings, provides information, resolves conflicts, and/or problems that may arise and assures management officials are familiar with the negotiated agreement. Serves as deciding official/management representative for group actions within VAGLAHS. Incumbent collaborates to negotiate, decide on, and/or coordinate work related changes affecting the organization; hear and resolve complaints, effect disciplinary actions; and identify and provide for management development and training needs of key staff members. Establishes and maintains good relations with various groups and organizations such as other hospitals, healthcare societies, medical schools, colleges and universities, accrediting agencies, public health officials and organizations, volunteer work groups, news media, veteran service organizations and the community at large. Leads in developing internal policies and programs concerning such matters as equal opportunity, merit promotion, labor management relations, and position management. Incumbent makes final HR, equipment and space recommendations for VAGLAHS. Incumbent represents management at labor management meetings, provides information, resolves conflicts, and/or problems that may arise and assures management officials are familiar with the negotiated agreement. Incumbent provides leadership and commitment from management in all areas of personnel administration and provides continuing special emphasis through the development and implementation of internal policies that will promote effective programs in equal employment opportunity, employment of the handicapped, labor relations, and position management. Continually reviews performance improvement and CQI progress to meet future patient care needs.

Public Relations

Participates in public speaking engagements and public relations events. Directs media relations for program administration. Incumbent establishes and maintains good relations with various civic and professional groups, service organizations, accrediting agencies, volunteer worker groups, news media, and the community at large, as well as individual contacts with veterans, visitors, and individuals in the community. Incumbent ensures effective integration of efforts/activities with other healthcare system operations and with community based agencies and activities. These involve local, state, and national officials, community based special interest groups, health care providers and representatives of affiliated medical schools. Plays a central role in developing and coordinating internal reviews to assure that administrative activities are in compliance with agency and accrediting requirements. The Associate Director for Administration and Support develops and maintains cooperative and harmonious relationships with the executive team, groups, organizations, and other healthcare providers in the local community, plus entities at the VISN, State, and national levels as indicated. Additionally, the incumbent ensures that issues cited by veterans, their families, and/or representatives are adequately addressed; and actively promotes productive relations with volunteer groups and other service organizations to create a positive perception in the local community. Participates as appropriate in activities of health related associations and of

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government management groups, e.g., Federal Executive Board or ACHE; and promotes the development of VADOD sharing agreements as appropriate.

Systematic Internal Review

He/she establishes system policies for the organization with regards to the methods, criteria, and other critical considerations associated with accreditation bodies. Incumbent assures services provided meet nationally accepted standards, are at least equal to those available in the community, and are cost effective. Employs mechanisms proven to be effective in the provision of service and assures all standards of regulatory and accrediting agencies are continuously met. Directs a continuous effort to stay abreast of all agency and external accrediting requirements, and develops comprehensive policies that address local concerns and exploits strengths. He/She influences members of the executive team, operating personnel, or subordinate staff members to comply with regulatory and accreditation requirements.

Establishes minimum standards for quality and productivity and directs program implementation to ensure compliance. He/she provides leadership and direction to promote the development and productivity of all employees supervised. Develops and maintains effective relationships with the executive leadership team and medical staff to earn their trust and respect. He/she fosters an environment that enhances VAGLAHS's culture and its employee's sense of pride to increase productivity, retention, and adds value to the healthcare system. Incumbent supports the continued development and training of subordinate managers and staff. Evaluates performance of employees under immediate supervision and initiates appropriate action in order to reward, guide, counsel, and instruct staff. He/she assures that accurate, complete, and timely information is submitted to program officials through the Office of Executive Correspondence when requested. Develops and maintains a system to ensure that beneficiary complaints and inquiries are appropriately received and resolved and that the sources of complaints of a recurring nature are investigated.

Factor 2: Complexity of Operational Situation

VAGLAHS is the most complex VA healthcare system of the 168 facilities in the nation. The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System is the largest integrated healthcare organization in the Department of Veterans Affairs with 945 operating and authorized beds, 3,500 FTEE, and an operating budget approaching \$500 million. It is a tertiary care referral facility and teaching hospital, providing a full range of patient care services with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research. Comprehensive healthcare is provided through primary care, tertiary care, and long-term care in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics and extended care, infectious disease, and imaging. In addition, VAGLAHS operates a 321 bed Domiciliary, which provides medical care in a therapeutic institutional environment, to prepare veterans for re-entry into a community setting. To complete the continuum of care, numerous geriatric services are offered. Two nursing home care units at the West Los Angeles Healthcare Center support these programs and one at the Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center for a total of 352 authorized beds and 226 operating beds and active community nursing home program. There are over 35 specialty and sub-specialty services provided to VAGLAHS customers. VAGLAHS employs 3500 FTEE, encumbering over 300 different occupations and grade levels. The organizations served by VAGLAHS include VA Regional Office, National

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Cemeteries, Veterans Outreach Centers and Community Based Outpatient Clinics, VISN 22, several Veterans Canteen Service operations, a large research enterprise, and the VHA's largest medical training programs. Ambulatory care is conducted in three (3) comprehensive ambulatory care centers at West Los Angeles, Sepulveda, and downtown Los Angeles. Primary care and some specialty services are provided at clinics in Santa Barbara, and Bakersfield with Community Based Outpatient Clinics providing primary care in Gardena, East Los Angeles, Lancaster, Lompoc, Pasadena, Oxnard, San Luis Obispo, Santa Paula, Lynwood and Ventura. VAGLAHS is associated with the Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program's Readjustment Counseling services located in Culver City and Santa Barbara. VAGLAHS uses its resources to provide services to veterans in the western United States, especially Veterans Integrated Service Networks 21 and 22 with a Consolidated Laundry, Consolidated Mail-Out Pharmacy, Radiation Therapy, Central Dental Laboratory, Positron Emission Tomography Scanner, Prosthetics Treatment Center, Fast Neutron Beam Therapy, Behavioral Improvement Treatment Refractory programs, Substance Abuse programs, Hospice program, Open Heart Surgery Referral Center, ad Regional Acute Psychiatric Treatment ward; and Department of Defense medical sharing agreements.

The incumbent must adapt to rapidly changing program priorities and requirements, frequent conflicts between various program requirements and available resources. This requires flexibility, teamwork and the ability to make quick decisions to address issues while considering a wide range of factors. The fluctuations in priorities adds difficulty to the planning process and the allocation (and re-allocation) of resources in a timely manner. This requires the incumbent to continually assess and re-assess short range plans and its impact on long range plans, its impact on available resources, in conjunction with VHA, VISN 22, and VAGLAHS goals.

Medical School Affiliations

VAGLAHS is affiliated with University of California, Los Angeles, The University of Southern California and 45 other universities, colleges, and vocational schools in 17 different medical, nursing, paramedical, and administrative programs. VAGLAHS maintains a rotating house staff in excess of 200 medical residents and interns. Dental residencies are provided for over 19 students in affiliation with the University of Southern California (USC) School of Dentistry. Allied health training programs are conducted in over 61 different occupations encompassing training agreements with 37 educational institutions. The inclusion of teaching as a major mission of VAGLAHS brings with it the need to consider VAGLAHS decisions in those areas that may impact the affiliating institutions. This includes ensuring and maintaining high quality services to patients with a constantly changing pool of inexperienced students, residents, and trainees.

Community Relations

The incumbent represents VAGLAHS in meetings with civic organizations, local hospital organizations, and special interest groups. VAGLAHS operates in a multi-cultural area of Southern California. The incumbent exercises skill in dealing with a unique multi-cultural milieu and wide variety of healthcare needs. Additionally, with the large number of inpatients and outpatients, there is a strain on resources, supplies, equipment, and personnel. The incumbent utilizes his/her tact in dealing with resource shortages, bed shortages, access to outpatient services, competition for space, supply and equipment demands, personnel issues

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related to supply and access, and public relations. This function is made particularly difficult by the dispersion of staff and resources at various sites throughout Southern California. The incumbent must make certain that the management systems and the communication channels are integrated, adaptable, and operating soundly and efficiently.

Medical Specialties

VAGLAHS maintains a staff capable of providing over 40 medical/surgical specialties and subspecialties. In addition to the permanent staff, there are over 260 Consultants and Attending staff to assist with providing these services. The diverse list of specialties creates specialized staffing, space, equipment and resources needs that further complicate decisions made by the incumbent.

Special Medical Programs

VAGLAHS also houses over 45 special medical programs including, but not limited to, Alcohol and Drug Treatment, Spinal Cord Injury, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Position Emission Tomography, Computer Tomography, and Nuclear Medicine Scanning and Imaging. These programs and their accompanying training and research programs require highly specialized equipment, consultants and experts, students, and personnel. These programs require constant monitoring to maintain a technological edge while ensuring quality healthcare. This further complicates the management of healthcare functions when the needs of these programs conflict with other medical specialties and sub-specialties.

Medical Research

With a staff of over 55 permanent employees, plus over 800 medical scientific experts, technicians, and physicians conducting over 500 different single-site and multi-site research projects, key areas of research being done at VAGLAHS include Schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease, Bone Cancer, sleep disorders, Alzheimer's, hypertension, Gene Therapy, AIDS and HIV Virology, Smoking Cessation, substance abuse and alcohol dependency, cardiovascular disorders, vision diseases, urologic disorders, pulmonary research, Audiology and Speech, Viral Hepatitis, epilepsy research, and many others. The incumbent must constantly assess separate financial accounts of the VAGLAHS Medical Research Program. Because of the significant size and scope of many research programs, fiscal management is extremely difficult. The incumbent must exercise particular care in considering resource allocation to and from the Research Program.

Geographic Location

VAGLAHS encompasses a large portion of the Southern California area. VAGLAHS consists of three healthcare centers: West Los Angeles Healthcare Center, Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center, and Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center. There is also the Bakersfield and Santa Barbara Community Based Outpatient Clinics, 5 Vet Centers (Sepulveda, Gardena, Culver City, East Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara), a tertiary care facility and 11 community based outpatient clinics. VAGLAHS serves veterans residing throughout five counties: Los Angeles, Ventura, Kern, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. VAGLAHS provides care to approximately 89,000 unique veterans each year in a location that is home to approximately 625,000 veterans. VAGLAHS is affiliated with both UCLA School of Medicine and USC

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School of Medicine as well as more than 45 colleges, universities and vocational schools in 17 different medical, nursing, paramedical, and administrative programs. The main site at the West Los Angeles Healthcare Center (WLAHC) is spread over an area covering approximately 365 acres in the midst of a major metropolitan area. This site (WLAHC) is approximately one mile from the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The site's proximity to the prominent communities of Santa Monica, Brentwood, Beverly Hills, and West Los Angeles, plus a major Los Angeles boulevard and a major Southern California freeway, makes the main site within VAGLAHS a unique facility. This presents unusual problems in terms of integration of administrative managerial and clinical functions; physical facility operations (such as sewage, water supply, etc); and maintaining safety (firefighting) and facility security levels. Notwithstanding, the complexities associated with the above factors, VAGLAHS's sphere of influence is expanded in other ways. VAGLAHS is designated as the responsible facility in the operation of Textile and Laundry serving two other facilities in addition to itself (Long Beach VA and Loma Linda). Coordination of and accountability for linen control is complicated by virtue of the necessity to coordinate activities with the operations of the other VA facilities.

Other Significant Facts

A large portion of the work involves making decisions and determinations for which there are no written precedents. In the multitude of professional and administrative matters involved, consistent use of sound management judgment is required. In order to operate effectively in this position, the incumbent must demonstrate health system administration skills and maturity of judgment reflecting significant management experience at a highly responsible level. Interpretation of VA regulations and policies must be made in such a manner as to ensure that they contribute to the accomplishment of VAGLAHS and VISN mission and goals, and that there intent is carried out.

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Reporting Relationships

